

UNITED PRESBYTERIANS AND THE  
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
by Samuel Hugh Moffett

Ever since John Calvin broke away from Roman Catholicism, but wrote to friends that he would cross the seven seas to restore the unity of the Church of Christ, Presbyterians have been, paradoxically, among the most divisive, and at the same time the most ecumenical of denominations.

They are notorious for their schisms, dividing and splintering down through history from Scotland to America to Korea. Yet these same divided Presbyterians were the ones who took agiant step forward toward Christian unity when, in 1875, they organized the first of the great denominational cooperative organizations, the World Presbyterian Alliance, a landmark in ecumenical history.

What is true of the Presbyterian family as a whole is also true of its largest constituent denomination, the United Presbyterian Church, which was known before 1958 as the "Northern Presbyterian" Church. More than seven serious church splits have shattered its peace and unity since it formed its first presbytery in 1705. The most serious of these, the division between North and South, is still not healed. And yet the United Presbyterian Church has been called the most ecumenical denomination in the world.

Whether that is true or not, this much is true, that although United Presbyterians have often sharply differed with each other and too often divided from each other, they have a solid tradition of Biblical theology that has pulled them back again and again to basic agreement with and commitment to the great recurring themes of what is known as the ecumenical movement: the call to Christian mission, and the call to Christian unity.

It was their commitment to both mission and unity that made

United Presbyterians so prominent at the first great ecumenical conference of our time, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, which many historians consider to be the starting point of the ecumenical movement. One of the major organizers of that historic conference was Dr. Robert E. Speer, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Korea was represented by another United Presbyterian, Dr. Samuel A. Moffett.

United Presbyterians enthusiastically supported and promoted the series of related but separate world conferences that grew out of Edinburgh. One line of conferences stressed Christian mission; Jerusalem 1927, Madras, 1938, etc. Presbyterian commitment to the Biblical imperative of telling the whole world about Christ and to the necessity of Christian cooperation in this great evangelistic task kept them wholeheartedly involved in this side of the ecumenical movement which centered organizationally in the International Missionary Council. United Presbyterian theologians like Dr. John A. Mackay fought unflinchingly to remind the ecumenical movement that it must be concerned with more than unity and must not forget its evangelistic mission.

Another line of world conferences that grew out of Edinburgh stressed the call to Christian unity, and led at last to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 at Amsterdam. In this too, United Presbyterians have been deeply involved from the beginning.

Since its formation the World Council of Churches has had only two General Secretaries, and it is no accident that both have been Presbyterians: Dr. W. A. Visser't Hooft (1948-1966) a Dutch Presbyterian, and Dr. Eugene Carson Blake (1966-) a United Presbyterian. It is also no accident that Presbyterians formed the largest denominational grouping at the recent Fourth Assembly of the World Council in Uppsala, Sweden, on July



1968. Statistics show that the 704 delegates from 235 churches at the Uppsala Assembly were made up denominationally as follows:

Presbyterians	20%	Baptist	6%
Lutherans	19%	United Churches	6%
Methodists	11%	Congregationalists	5%
Anglicans	11%	Disciples of Christ	5%
Eastern Orthodox	8%	Brethren	2%
Others	13%		

At the Third Assembly of of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi in 1961, the two organizational currents of the ecumenical movement the International Missionary Council representing mission, and the World Council of Churches representing unity became one. The International Missionary Council became the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. The man who was perhaps most responsible for this final harmonizing of the two wings of the movement was a United Presbyterian, Dr. John A. Mackay who had pleaded with his church for years that the Presbyterian ideal was Christian unity for Christian mission and evangelism.

It was therefore quite fitting that the Fourth Assembly at Uppsala should elect as one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches another United Presbyterian missionary statesman, Dr. John Coventry Smith, who as Moderator of the 180th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church represented Christian unity, and as General Secretary of the United Presbyterian Church's Board of Foreign Missions (COEMA) represents Christian mission and evangelism.

For United Presbyterians believe that historically, theologically and Biblically they belong in the World Council of Churches to keep these two great emphases alive and central in Protestantism's most important ecclesiastical organization, and to witness to the whole world to the unity and mission that is ours in Jesus Christ.

몽살라 대회 제4분과 위원회

새문안교회 목사 감 신 명

1968年 몽살라에서 모인 세계 교회 협의회 제4차 총회에서 논의된 문제중 우리의 관심을 끈 분과는 아무래도 4분과 위원회이다. 왜냐하면 이 분과 위원회에서 다른 주제가 국제문제에 있어서正義와 平和문제로 되어 있고 우리 나라가 分斷되어진 諸國체간의 긴장과 평화가 우리의 국가 생활에 직접 영향을 끼치기 때문이다. 우리의 관심을 집중시킨 문제는 역시 中공 문제가었지만 이번 대회에서 우리가 느끼고 직 접 목격 한 것은 현재 세계 회 지도자들은 국제 문제 중에 中공 문제는 그다지 긴급한 것으로 생각하지 않고 있다는 점이다. 그만큼 東西의 理想 信念 분쟁에 뿌리를 박은 문제보다 목전의 긴박 사태에 더욱 신경을 쓰고 있는 것 같아 보인다.

“국제 문제에 있어서 正義와 平和문제”라는 주제하에 모인 제4분과 위원회에서 제일 중요하게 다룬 문제가 바로 韓半 문제였다. 이 韓半 문제에 결하여서 인권 문제(주로 인종 차별 문제)가 다 부여했고, 또 신앙 양심 때문에 군복무를 거부하는 소위 평화주의자의 문제, 中공 자유문제 등이 논의되었다.

그 다음 중요한 것은 국제간에 있어서의 경제적 정의문제였다. 사실 경제적 정의에 관해서는 제3분과 위원회에서 “세계 경제적 사회 개발”이라는 주제로서 충분히 다루어졌지만은 국제 평화 문제에 제4분과에서도 다루게 된 것이다. 이번 총회의 전반 문제에 걸쳐 경제 문제가 언급되지 않은 때라곤 거의 없었다.

제4분과 위원회의 공식 결의문의 전문 번역은 “기독교 사상” 10월호(1968)에 게재되었기에 여기서 증복을 할 필요는 없는 것 같다. 첫째 부분에서는 전쟁과 평화라는 제목하에 약소 국가들이 핵무기의 제재를 감수하여야 하는 한편, 핵 보유 국가들이 또는 무기 개발을 중지해야 한다고 하였다. 그리고 국제 문제를 전쟁



# 대한 예수교 장로회와 W.C.C.

(W.C.C. 재물적 제안에 부치는 글)

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For, Dr. Samuel Moffet  
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